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General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

305th meeting

Tuesday, 30 March 2010, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Zinsou ..... (Benin)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Expression of sympathy in connection with the terrorist attacks in the Russian Federation

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to present my most sincere condolences to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation on the occasion of the terrorist attacks that occurred in Moscow yesterday, which took the lives of approximately 40 people and wounded dozens more.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): I would like to remind delegations that the deadline for submitting names for inclusion on the list of participants is Wednesday 31 March at 6 p.m.

General exchange of views *(continued)*

Mr. Kim Bonghyun (Republic of Korea): At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 2010 substantive session. My delegation appreciates your sincere and tireless efforts in bringing this session together, including your work during the previous three-year cycle. As a member of this year's Bureau, I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in your work, as well as the work of the two working group chairs.

We have reached the middle of the three-year cycle, shortly before the nuclear security summit and the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). My delegation hopes and expects that this year's deliberations of the Commission will be able to facilitate the global efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation and lay a solid foundation for the 2011 substantive session.

In this regard, I would like to emphasize the importance of achieving relevance and balance in the work of the Disarmament Commission. Securing balance among the substantive agenda items may help restore the Commission's relevance, which has been unable to produce any recommendations since 1999. My delegation sincerely believes that practical confidence-building measure in the field of conventional weapons require more attention in this year's deliberations, taking into account both the upcoming Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on small arms, which will consider implementation of the United Nations United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty.

Since 2009, the international community has witnessed positive developments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the recent agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation on a new START Treaty. We believe that the

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agreement is a meaningful step towards nuclear disarmament, and we welcome it as a positive sign for the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We also take note of other initiatives, including the five-point proposal by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the comprehensive report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

My delegation firmly believes that further progress in nuclear disarmament is required for the sake of integrity, confidence and the legitimacy of the NPT regime. The outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference will be crucial to the future of the NPT regime, and we would like to see a firm commitment to nuclear disarmament. In this regard, my delegation would like to reiterate the importance of an entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty without further delay.

The Republic of Korea firmly believes in the importance of further reinforcement of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1887 (2009), and strongly support the universalization of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) additional protocol as the best means to reinforce the monitoring and verification mechanism of the IAEA. We also appreciate the Nuclear Security Summit as both a timely and necessary initiative to address the challenges of nuclear terrorism and expect a fruitful outcome.

My delegation also would like to highlight the importance of the early resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue, which is vital to securing lasting peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia, as well as to sustaining the integrity of the global non-proliferation regime. In this regard, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return promptly to the Six-Party Talks, fully comply with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, and implement the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 and subsequent documents adopted at the Six-Party Talks. President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea has proposed a grand bargain initiative, which aims at a comprehensive agreement related to North Korea's irreversible denuclearization and the five parties' corresponding measures. We hope to engage in negotiations based on the grand bargain initiative when the Six-Party Talks resume.

The year 2010 is a truly crucial juncture in the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Bearing in mind the frustration that prevailed throughout the past decade, we should not let go of this better opportunity to further strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is important that we demonstrate flexibility and a spirit of cooperation with a view to yielding greater progress in our deliberations in the Disarmament Commission. My delegation hopes that fruitful outcomes of this year's session of the Commission will contribute to adding momentum to the success of the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this deliberative body. Your wealth of experience in this field will guide our deliberations to a fruitful outcome. You may be assured of the support of the Nigerian delegation.

We commend the insights provided in the opening statement of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Sergio Duarte.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as with the statement on behalf of the African Group delivered earlier by my delegation. In addition, we would like to emphasize the following points.

It is regrettable that the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the main deliberative body of the United Nations charged with the responsibility of considering and making recommendations on various disarmament-related issues, as well as follow-up on relevant decisions and recommendations of the special sessions devoted to disarmament, has not succeeded in reaching consensus on the main substantive issues before it, even in the current circle.

Nigeria remains concerned about the serious threat which the existence of nuclear weapons poses to international peace and security. In this regard, we believe that nuclear disarmament should remain the highest priority of Member States and that the best way to address negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation is through multilateralism, a core principle endorsed by General Assembly resolution

63/50. We therefore call on nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States alike to redouble their efforts to achieve the objective of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects in accordance with the spirit and letter of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We are equally concerned over the growing expenditure on military hardware and the massive build-up of these destructive weapons at the expense of basic human needs. These weapons have contributed immensely to tarnishing the global security landscape.

Nigeria believes that negative security assurances made by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States should be unconditional, legally binding and unequivocal. However, the current voting pattern does not portray this trend; rather, it has been marked by a high level of abstentions on the part of nuclear-weapon States and their allies. The last session of the General Assembly was no exception. We call on concerned Member States to reverse this trend in order to not promote mistrust and thereby revive the nuclear arms race, a development that could negate all the achievements acquired over the past decades.

Pending the achievement of a nuclear-free world, my delegation supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as they represent positive steps and important measures towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We urge Member States in the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones to encourage other regions that have not yet done so to establish such zones.

In this regard, we welcome the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba on 15 July 2009, and call on African Member States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so in order to enhance its effective contribution to strengthening regional and global peace and security. Similarly, we call on the two nuclear-weapon States yet to ratify the Treaty of Pelindaba to do so without further delay.

Nigeria welcomes the positive developments in the ongoing arms reduction talks between the United States of America and the Russian Federation. This demarche by these two nuclear-weapon States is in accordance with the principles and objectives of the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. We further hope that it will serve as an impetus to the parties and their allies to achieve the ultimate goal of the NPT — the total and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons on Earth — thus enhancing the possibility of the realization of the much dreamt-of paradise on Earth.

Nigeria remains concerned by the proliferation and illicit manufacture and transfer of conventional weapons and commends the overwhelming number of Member States who contributed to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 61/89 on the establishment of an arms trade treaty. We look forward to the commencement in July 2010 of the process aimed at developing an arms trade treaty, and sincerely hope that it will eventually lead to the adoption of a legally binding instrument that will eliminate the destabilizing effects of the illicit trade, circulation and transfer of conventional weapons.

As a result of the high mobility and lethality of these weapons and their destructive effects in most developing countries, they are now being referred to as weapons of mass destruction. The pernicious effects of these weapons are that they maim lives and limbs and hinder Governments' attempts to promote development and the progress of humanity. They also foster a culture of corruption and multiply the risks of and encourage the transfer of arms into the hands of non-State actors.

It is for these reasons that my delegation continues to actively support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In this connection, we wish to call on all delegations to pay special attention to the aspects of the Programme of Action relating to cooperation and technical assistance at the forthcoming Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action.

On the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, the Nigerian delegation wishes to emphasize the following several points. There is a need to strengthen efforts to advance the goal of general and complete disarmament based on the principles of verifiability, transparency and irreversibility, as well as the principle of undiminished security for all. We stress the importance of the goals and objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Negotiations should commence on a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The entry into force of the

Comprehensive-Test-Ban Treaty should be expedited. Cooperation, assistance and capacity-building should be promoted to Member States, subregions and regions in order to contribute to the aforementioned objectives.

The significant roles being played by civil society, the academic community and non-governmental organizations in raising awareness and providing impetus for progress in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation should be encouraged. The importance of the mutually reinforcing relationship between disarmament and development should be emphasized, and we should endeavour to ensure the least possible diversion of the world's already scarce human and economic resources to armaments, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. Such efforts, we believe, would incite the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to recognize the contribution that disarmament could provide to meeting them.

We therefore wish to appeal to all Member States to expedite action on the draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade in order to conclude the related preparatory work during the 2010 session of the Commission. We further appeal to all Member States to show flexibility and understanding of one another's points of view so that we can together achieve the required consensus in our deliberations at this session.

Mr. Cuello Camilo (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this important Commission. We recognize your excellent diplomatic skills and vast experience in disarmament affairs. Your previous work presiding over an important working group of the Commission promises an excellent session. You can count on the fullest collaboration of the Dominican Republic in ensuring a successful outcome of your work. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups.

I should like to acknowledge the praiseworthy efforts being exerted by the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs with a view to giving new impetus to the disarmament programme of the United Nations.

As the High Representative said yesterday in his statement at the opening of the session, the Commission is beginning its work this year in an atmosphere that is different from that of previous years, characterized as it is by a spirit of affirmative multilateralism that facilitates deliberations on disarmament and non-proliferation. The Dominican Republic associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Rio Group.

On this occasion, I shall address several items of particular importance to the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic is a pacifist country that has never invaded another country despite the hostilities it has suffered before, during and since we attained independence in 1844. The Dominican Republic neither produces nor exports weapons. The Dominican Republic therefore supports disarmament without reservations.

The Dominican Republic therefore believes, as the representative of Indonesia said yesterday on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, that the United States of America and the Russian Federation, in their efforts to conclude a post-START agreement, must consider all the possibilities offered by our multilateral disarmament commitments. We trust that the political will demonstrated by the parties will lead us in that direction.

Therefore, the Dominican Republic believes that the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime requires the preservation, improvement and completion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT is the true cornerstone and fundamental instrument of our efforts to attain disarmament and non-proliferation. As the representative of Spain said yesterday on behalf of the European Union, the three complementary pillars of the NPT — non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — make it a unique and irreplaceable framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and stability. We must generate the necessary political will and impetus to ensure that the upcoming meeting of the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT will strengthen disarmament mechanisms in general.

We welcome the initiative launched by the United States to convene an important summit in Washington, D.C., to address the issues of terrorism and nuclear security. It is critical to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons.

That leads us to the issue of the vulnerability of the Caribbean region arising from the transportation through our region of radioactive waste. Efforts to confront the challenge of climate change have promoted a renewed boom in energy generation by new nuclear power plants currently under construction. It is therefore likely that we will see an increase in the quantity and frequency of radioactive waste shipments travelling through our vulnerable region. Clearly, the transport of such waste exposes us to possible terrorist attacks, which could have tragic consequences for our fragile maritime and coastal ecosystems.

The Dominican Republic therefore reiterates that the transportation of radioactive waste must be carried out in full respect for the sovereignty of the nations of the Caribbean basin. Routes must be planned and the transportation of radioactive waste must take place in such a way as to minimize the risk of terrorist attacks or accidents that could affect our region, and in full compliance with the principles of international law. We should also be provided with guarantees that, should the unthinkable occur and an accident take place, we would be adequately compensated.

Another issue of particular importance to the Dominican Republic is that of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. This scourge, which is exacerbated by the porosity of our border with Haiti and our status as a transit country for the illicit traffic in illicit substances, has permeated our society and increased the incidence of violence and the number of innocent victims. Rampant crime and looting make it easier to gain access to such weapons, posing a threat to peace, stability and security and impeding development. The Dominican Republic has implemented an active disarmament programme focused on the civilian population, which has considerably reduced the number of fatalities attributed to such arms.

Our considerable efforts have not, however, been sufficient. They need to be supported by international efforts to shed light on this complex, lucrative and harmful trade. This goal should be identified by the international community as a priority in the field of disarmament. Any measure that would contribute to controlling the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons would help to create a climate of peace, greater harmony and global security. It would also increase the prospects for conflict prevention and mitigate the destructive effects of conflicts on many civilian populations, in particular in developing countries.

In conclusion, we congratulate the Commission on its contribution to the development of global standards that, without a doubt, have been beneficial to international security. We therefore hope that further steps will be taken at this session on the ambitious disarmament agenda that we have set for ourselves with a view to a successful outcome.

Mrs. Grau (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin today by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. You can count on my delegation's involvement in the work of Working Groups I and II at this second session of the current cycle.

My statement in this general debate focuses on two points, the first of a general nature and the second more specifically related to the 2010 session.

Regarding the first, more general point, it would be useful for the Disarmament Commission to revisit its working methods and open itself to ideas from outside in order to reinforce its credibility. The Commission's difficulties in reaching a consensus are long-standing and have raised questions concerning its usefulness and doubts about its capacity to contribute to disarmament.

It is true that, since 1999, the Commission has been unable to fulfil its mandate to deliberate disarmament issues and make recommendations to the General Assembly. In 1999 and even before that, however, the Commission had fulfilled its mandate by adopting by consensus texts that included principles, guidelines or recommendations. This shows that the Commission is indeed capable of contributing to achieving progress on disarmament. Progress is still, as always, needed. The Disarmament Commission can add real value to the overall United Nations disarmament machinery. To that end, a review of its working methods could prove very useful.

My second, more specific point relating to this session is that, following the difficulties experienced in adopting the 2009 agenda, it is essential to make progress in our work on making recommendations on, first, achieving nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; and secondly, the elements of a declaration of the 2010s as the fourth

disarmament decade. The current environment is indeed conducive to reanimating our work, thanks to the previous concrete work carried out by the two Chairs of the Working Groups.

Progress at this session would ensure the credibility to which I referred earlier. The next Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will undeniably have a direct impact on the atmosphere in the Commission. But that should not deter delegations from pursuing their shared objective of achieving disarmament in order to strengthen world peace and security.

Mr. Okuda (Japan): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. I would also like to extend congratulations to the newly elected members of the Bureau. The delegation of Japan will provide its utmost support to you and to the Bureau member States during this session.

Ever since United States President Barack Obama declared his commitment to seeking a world without nuclear weapons in April 2009, there have been numerous developments around the world concerning nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For instance, in September 2009, the Security Council convened a summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and the Global Summit on Nuclear Security will be held in April 2010. Moreover, the United States and the Russian Federation recently concluded their negotiations on a START follow-on treaty.

While these efforts certainly serve to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, ongoing nuclear issues remain, including the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the threat of nuclear terrorism. Japan believes that the first step to eliminating these nuclear threats is for the entire globe to embrace the vision of a world without nuclear weapons. To that end, we must commit ourselves to the pursuit of a peaceful and safe world without nuclear weapons through a focused, practical and incremental approach.

Specifically, substantial progress in the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the achievement of a meaningful agreement on all three pillars of the Treaty at the Review Conference in May, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the prompt commencement of negotiations on and conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons are crucial to the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Furthermore, as a first practical step towards a world without nuclear weapons, Japan finds worthy of attention such ideas as enhancing the effectiveness of security assurances not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or retaining nuclear weapons solely for the purpose of deterring others from using such weapons.

From this point of view, Japan submits to the General Assembly on an annual basis a draft resolution entitled "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". In addition, drawing upon the valuable recommendations contained in the report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, which was a joint initiative of Japan and Australia, the Governments of the two countries submitted a package proposal of practical measures to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as a working paper for the upcoming NPT Review Conference. We invite Member States to join in our efforts and express our hope that this proposal will be reflected in the final document of the Conference.

Japan is convinced that, if the aforementioned efforts see steady progress, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will be comprehensively advanced and the 2010s will be a remarkable decade for these issues. It is fortunate, in that connection, that the current session of the Disarmament Commission will discuss a draft declaration for a fourth disarmament decade. It is Japan's view that the declaration should outline the most important principles concerning disarmament and non-proliferation within the broad areas of disarmament in a concise and well-balanced manner and should serve as a guideline providing insight for the 2010s.

Japan also attaches great importance to the issue of conventional weapons, which continue to cause widespread loss of life throughout the world. Japan appreciates that discussion will take place on this issue during the current cycle under the item entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of

conventional weapons". However, it may be preferable to submit and share among Member States written comments concerning the outcome document during the intersessional period, as the deliberation period in the current cycle will be brief.

A good basis for discussion on this topic was established in the last Disarmament Commission cycle. As Japan places importance on confidence-building through such measures as the Register of Conventional Arms and the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, we will participate actively in the discussions.

The Disarmament Commission at one time had the distinction of producing various useful guidelines and recommendations. In recent years, however, there have been no substantive outcomes. The Commission should draft recommendations from the perspective of seeking to recover its former important role. Japan had high hopes for the adoption of the draft declaration of a fourth disarmament decade during last year's session, but this did not materialize. In the current session, we should strive to adopt the draft declaration at an early stage and thereby contribute to the revitalization of the Commission and to giving renewed momentum towards the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. I am confident that, under your able leadership and with the professional assistance of the Secretariat, the Commission will have a fruitful session this year.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The first substantive agenda item, dealing with the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, is of great relevance to international security. The greatest threat to international and regional security and human civilization arises from the continued existence of nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon States in the twenty-first century continue to believe in doctrines that justify achieving security by relying on nuclear arsenals and threatening the lives of millions of men, women and children.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that the most effective way to remove the nuclear threat is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. At the time of its conclusion, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was seen as a genuine promise to rid the world from the nuclear nightmare. However, 40 years after the entry into force of the NPT, the nuclear threat persists, and real progress towards nuclear disarmament has yet to be achieved. More than 25,000 nuclear weapons still exist. Public opinion around the world is extremely weary of the continuation of this situation and rightly expects the nuclear-weapon States to take expeditious and concrete actions to fulfil their contractual obligations with regard to nuclear disarmament.

Against this backdrop, the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the overwhelming majority of Member States, maintains its position that the elimination of nuclear weapons remains the highest priority for the international community.

In the past decade, certain developments have given rise to the pervasive concern that some nuclear-weapon States have no genuine intention of fulfilling their disarmament obligations under the NPT. If the NPT is to endure, it is essential that the nuclear-weapon States prove that they are serious about their commitments.

We look forward to the fulfilment by some nuclear-weapon States of their stated intention to come into full compliance with their nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT. While the recent movement is a necessary step in the right direction, neither the speed nor the scope of such movement is sufficient for implementing the nuclear disarmament part of the NPT. Limited bilateral and unilateral arms reductions fall far short of international expectations for real and effective steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and can never be a substitute for the obligation of nuclear-weapon States to completely eliminate nuclear weapons. Such reductions should go beyond the decommissioning of nuclear weapons. To be effective, reductions in nuclear weapons must be irreversible, internationally verifiable and transparent.

Our efforts in this Commission should be aimed at reinforcing the interrelated pillars of the NPT, a treaty that is the foundation of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the best way to guarantee the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is to ensure the full and non-selective

implementation of the NPT and its universality. In this context, failure to implement effective nuclear disarmament measures increases the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The lack of implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations is not the only challenge facing the NPT. Some nuclear-weapon States are proliferating nuclear weapons horizontally and vertically by transferring nuclear weapons technology and materials to non-parties to the NPT, by developing new types of nuclear weapons or modernizing them, and by continuing nuclear-weapon-sharing arrangements with non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly through the deployment of nuclear weapons in the European NATO countries. The Commission needs to reflect on those challenges and to recommend ways and means to address them.

Nuclear-weapon States are sending conflicting signals on non-proliferation. For instance, on the one hand they say they want to prevent proliferation by strengthening the NPT; on the other hand, by allocating and spending billions of dollars to improve their arsenals, they send very strong signals that they want to retain nuclear weapons and continue to view them as vital to their security. If further proliferation is to be prevented, the nuclear-weapon States have to take serious and systematic steps to de-emphasize the role and importance of nuclear weapons.

The universality of the NPT should be vigorously promoted, in particular in regions of tension. In that context, the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East as a zone free from nuclear weapons is an essential measure. The Israeli regime is the only non-party to the NPT in the Middle East region. Its unlawful nuclear weapons programme, which has been assisted by France, seriously threatens both regional and international peace and security and has blocked the achievement of the universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the Middle East region.

The right of all NPT States parties to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination constitutes one of the basic pillars of the Treaty. The balance between rights and obligations, which is the basis of any sound legal instrument, guarantees the longevity of the NPT by providing incentives for membership and compliance. Non-proliferation measures or further progress in strengthening safeguards must not prejudice the national development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy or cooperation among NPT States parties for peaceful uses.

The inalienable rights of States parties extend to all aspects of peaceful technologies and are not limited to specific areas. The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to pursue all legal aspects of nuclear technology, including the fuel cycle, exclusively for peaceful purposes. No one should harbour the illusion that any proposal or measure that requires the cessation or even suspension of a lawful activity under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervision will be accepted.

In that context, while I have the floor I would like to address the statements made yesterday on behalf of the European Union (EU) by the representative of Spain with regard to Iran's peaceful nuclear programme. I would like to place on record that Iran's commitment to the NPT is steadfast. I shall not dignify the rest of the comments made by the EU representative, other than to reject them. We urge EU members to abandon their false assumptions and rhetoric about Iran's nuclear programme and to respect the right of the Iranian nation to nuclear technology under the NPT. EU members should focus on addressing the real threats emanating from the hundreds of nuclear weapons deployed on their continent, rather than concentrating on imaginary proliferation risks and the obfuscation of IAEA reports.

In conclusion, I should like to return to the substantive agenda item on the draft declaration of the fourth disarmament decade. At last year's session, the Working Group had a good start and engaged in serious deliberations. Apart from the counterproductive positions taken by France, there was general agreement that the declaration should be a reflection of agreed principles, priorities and objectives of international community in the field of disarmament. At this year's session, Iran's delegation looks forward to working with other delegations and the Chair of the Working Group to conclude the deliberations and adopt a balanced declaration. Such a result will enable the Commission to devote sufficient time at next year's session to the issue of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Mr. AlNafisee (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to extend to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of the

Disarmament Commission at its 2010 session. We are fully confident that your experience and prudent leadership will lead to the success of the Commission's deliberations during this session. The delegation of Saudi Arabia would also like to reiterate its full support for the deliberations of the Commission under your leadership in order to produce the results to which we all aspire.

My Government would like to reiterate the importance of the pivotal role played by the Disarmament Commission as a specialized technical body that contributes to mobilizing disarmament mechanisms, which are quasi-stalled, and mitigates threats to security and peace throughout the world. In addition, my Government reaffirms its full commitment to the principles of disarmament identified by the international community. That commitment is reflected in our accession to several major conventions and treaties in that regard.

The Kingdom was among the first signatories to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We have also signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including the annexed small quantities protocol. In addition, we are cooperating on an ongoing basis with the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) by providing it with the successive required reports and with adequate information on existing and updated regulations and legislation. The latest, although not the last, of those was our national bill on the implementation of the Convention on Chemical Weapons, which the Saudi Council of Ministers adopted on 28 November 2005.

The international community is fully aware that there is no other way to achieve a secure and dignified life for future generations than by strengthening international peace and security through respect for international treaties and conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation by all Member States, as that will help to reduce the nuclear threat and to combat proliferation. In spite of the great efforts exerted in the field of disarmament, including those made by this body and other disarmament forums, there are shortcomings in implementation and serious enforcement due to the lack of political will on the part of some nuclear-weapon States to dispose of their weapons or to subject them to the comprehensive international safeguards regime of the IAEA. That behaviour has led to ongoing competition in nuclear testing and in the development of weapons of mass destruction.

Deviation from the principles of international legitimacy, the provisions of international law and the requirements of international justice has been and remains the main source of the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, including the Gulf region. The decades-long attempt to turn a blind eye to the nuclear programme conducted by Israel — which does not even claim to produce electricity, but produces only weapons of mass destruction — constitutes an original sin that has prompted some countries to move forward in the development of their nuclear capabilities by invoking the double standard to justify non-compliance with the resolutions of international legitimacy in that regard. Again, we believe that the easiest, fastest and most effective solution is to declare the Middle East, including the Gulf region, a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, without exception.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the right of all countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including the right to have access to know-how and peaceful nuclear technology; at the same time, it calls on all parties to remain on the path of negotiations and peaceful solutions. In this forum, my delegation calls upon all parties to commit themselves to a peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and stresses the importance of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency in that regard, especially since Iran has always declared that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes, thus providing fertile ground that has not yet been exhausted.

The world today faces grave challenges that increase our Organization's responsibility. We should make hope a beacon that guides us to act with an objective, serious and constructive spirit. That is what we aspire to achieve through the work of this body under your leadership, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pham Vinh Quang (Viet Nam): At the outset, Sir, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2010 substantive session. I am sure that under your skilful stewardship, the work of the Commission will achieve a successful outcome. Viet Nam also wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Our session commences at an important juncture, when there are renewed expectations on addressing various challenges to international security, especially nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The year 2009 witnessed various bilateral and multilateral plans calling for action to reduce nuclear dangers, raising new hope for a world without nuclear weapons. More international conferences and meetings related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are scheduled in 2010.

Recently the United States of America and the Russian Federation reached a new bilateral strategic arms treaty. However, the challenges are enormous and far from over. There still exists a nuclear stockpile capable of destroying the entire world many times over. The situation of the proliferation of nuclear weapons is undergoing new and complex developments. Despite many efforts, we are still facing serious problems in reaching consensus on the core issues of the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

To overcome this stalemate, Viet Nam is of the view that multilateralism, with the central role of the United Nations, remains essential to any effort to find sustainable solutions to the challenges to peace and security. Therefore, we reaffirm our support for the important role of the Disarmament Commission with its mandate as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, and call upon all United Nations Member States to work in a cooperative problem-solving spirit in order to make a breakthrough and achieve agreement on recommendations, based on the agenda of our session. We also appreciate the hard work of Chairs of the two Working Groups and consider their non-papers as laying the solid groundwork for our deliberations.

Regarding the first substantive agenda item, my delegation reiterates its long-standing principled position in full support of general and complete disarmament, with top priority given to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Viet Nam supports all initiatives towards genuine disarmament, including those offered by the Non-Aligned Movement, by the Secretary-General in his five-point proposal and by last September's Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191), as well as those to be offered by the coming Nuclear Security Summit in early April.

Viet Nam attaches special importance to the upcoming 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and is of the view that the best way to advance nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is to enhance the effectiveness of the NPT, which is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We express our deep concern over the continued existence of nuclear weapons, which pose a destructive threat to mankind. The only absolute guarantee against nuclear catastrophe is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm the need for nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with all their obligations and commitments under article VI of the Treaty, including the 13 practical steps to which they agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

The promotion of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should constitute a solid pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Therefore, the President of Viet Nam made a proposal at the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament last September to convene an international conference on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We believe that the 2010 NPT Review Conference will offer an opportunity for Member States to review the progress in implementing the Treaty's provisions and to renew their commitment to the principles and purposes of the NPT, as well as to find practical measures to strengthen all three pillars of the Treaty.

Viet Nam wishes to reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament. Last year, as the first President of the Conference, Viet Nam, together with the other Presidents, contributed to the adoption by consensus in 2009 of the programme of work for the Conference. This year, we call on the

Conference on Disarmament to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work as soon as possible. It is important to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified time frame, as well as to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction. Viet Nam attaches great importance to the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material cut-off treaty.

It is the consistent policy of Viet Nam to oppose war and promote disarmament for the protection of peace. My country remains committed to fulfilling all obligations and responsibilities under disarmament treaties to which it is a party. Recently, in 2006, the President of Viet Nam signed the instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, in 2007, Viet Nam concluded with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) an Additional Protocol to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

We strongly support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world and welcome the Second Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, which will be held in April 2010. As an active member of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Viet Nam is working hard with other countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to ensure that the South-East Asian region remains free of nuclear weapons. We also take this opportunity to urge the nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, as an effective step in further strengthening confidence-building measures between nuclear-weapon States and the countries of South-East Asia.

My delegation fully supports the agenda item entitled "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade", and believes that the declaration will restore to disarmament issues the high priority they deserve. The declaration should set forth a broad agenda for the United Nations disarmament machinery to pursue during the next 10 years in the areas of arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. The declaration should be in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the guiding principles of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-20/2). It also needs to emphasize the relevance and validity of the disarmament objectives set forth by the First, Second and Third Disarmament Decades and consolidate multilaterally negotiated principles and norms in all areas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation fully recognizes the challenges and opportunities which the Commission is now facing. We call upon all States Members of the United Nations to display the political will and flexibility, consistent with the relevant guidelines adopted by the General Assembly, necessary to achieve agreement as soon as possible. We will spare no effort to work closely with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the Bureau and all other delegations for a successful outcome of this session.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to offer the Sudan's condolences to the delegation of the brotherly Russian Federation for the heinous crime that killed innocent civilians at two subway stations in Moscow.

Allow me also to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this important Commission, especially in view of the fact that you are from a friendly African country that has made well-known contributions to disarmament and multilateralism. We wish you and the other members of the Bureau, as well as the Commission's Working Groups, every success. I also wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in revitalizing and reactivating the multilateral mechanisms and treaties in the field of disarmament in the maintenance of international peace and security. I wish to assure you, Sir, that the delegation of the Sudan will actively participate in the deliberations of the Commission in order to realize these objectives and to contribute to the drafting of the declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade.

I also wish to associate my delegation with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, as well as with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Arab Group.

The current session of the Disarmament Commission comes at a time when relevant regional and international developments in the field of armaments and disarmament underscore the fact that the only way to secure international peace and security is to reactivate multilateral efforts aimed at countering the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and to prevent the balance between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States from being upset any further.

It is indeed regrettable that the disarmament mechanism has suffered setbacks over the past decade and that many of the major Powers have continued to develop nuclear, chemical and biological technologies and to compete in experimentation under the pretext of strengthening national security and pre-emptive deterrence, in spite of all of the agreements, instruments and protocols calling for the prohibition of such practices. The majority view in this Organization is that selectivity and injustice are applied to addressing disarmament issues. That, in turn, only strengthens the suspicion that these instruments are not effective, especially since such agreements are effectuated not through an increase in adherence but through their full and equal implementation in a transparent manner without double standards.

We welcome the adoption by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at its fifty-third ordinary session of two resolutions, one on Israeli nuclear capabilities and the other on the application of IAEA safeguards regime in the Middle East. We also wish to emphasize the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the only deliberative forum charged with disarmament affairs. We appreciate all the efforts that led to the adoption of the Conference's programme of work last May. We wish to commend our sister Republic of Algeria for the conciliatory efforts it deployed to achieve that consensus.

It is our hope that disarmament issues will be viewed from a new perspective in the light of the global financial crisis and its consequences for developing countries. It is imperative to reduce budget allocations for armaments and to prioritize the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, including combating poverty and natural disasters and favouring the environment and sustainable development. In his opening statement, the Chairman asserted that climate change affects disarmament issues because of the increase in conflicts and the resulting spread of illicit arms in hotspots where competition for resources is very strong.

It is universally recognized that there is an immediate and compelling need to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world. We believe that such zones are one way of strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament regime and of consolidating regional and international peace and security.

As we all know, security is indivisible. It is true that many countries have signed agreements to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones or have joined them. The signatories of such agreements cover 50 per cent of the surface area of the globe, yet there are many areas of tension that call for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, in particular the Middle East, which could have been turned into a nuclear-weapon-free zone had it not been for the refusal of Israel to subject its nuclear programme to the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards regime. This situation poses a real threat to peace and security, not only in that volatile region of the world, but also throughout the world.

In this respect, we would recall that the resolution adopted on the Middle East in the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was part of a package that linked the extension of the Treaty and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We also appeal to all Member States that have not yet joined African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty to do so as soon as possible, in view of the importance of that agreement as one of the main pillars of non-proliferation on the African continent.

The Sudan is an active partner in all international disarmament efforts. It was among the first countries to have joined such agreements and relevant international instruments as the NPT, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to which we adhered after participating in the workshop convened in Vienna on the objectives of the Organization and the methods of work of its various centres throughout the world.

Our capital, Khartoum, also hosted the first meeting of the African Union Commission to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention. That conference produced significant proposals to establish

a chemical-weapon-free zone in Africa and to limit countries' activities in that field to peaceful uses only. In addition, the Sudan has actively contributed to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and has participated in related workshops in Jordan, Cairo, Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Algeria and here in New York.

In addition to nuclear disarmament as a priority of the international community, we pay close attention to the issue of small arms and light weapons. My country, like many others around the world, is severely affected by this phenomenon, which, as delegations know, has economic dimensions complicated by such natural phenomena as climate change, drought, desertification, the struggle for water resources and grazing. As a result, the possession of weapons and the power that results therefrom has become a tradition among local groups, and small arms disarmament is now among our main concerns. Our country is aware of the dangers of this phenomenon and of the need to eradicate it. We have therefore participated in all relevant international and regional events, and are engaged in a national effort to combat the proliferation of small and light weapons. We do so in recognition of the relationship between the spread of these weapons and transnational organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking.

In this respect, the Sudan is leading multidimensional efforts in Africa within the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the Sahel and Sahara States grouping, and has made bilateral arrangements with neighbouring States to demarcate borders and strengthen customs and control checkpoints. While we emphasize such efforts, we wish to make it clear that they should be undertaken by the arms-manufacturing States, and not only by the countries affected by the problem.

The arms-manufacturing countries should refrain from exporting weapons to non-State actors or individuals so that they will not have access to such weapons. We stress the importance of providing all the necessary support, especially technical support, to the countries affected by this phenomenon, in accordance with the provisions of section II of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In conclusion, the Sudan insists on the full right of all countries to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes without restriction. We also note that the Sudan has expressed reservations regarding the possible arms trade treaty, based on the fact that the draft agreement incongruously ties the right to import and export weapons to controversial criteria within the United Nations, including those of human rights and balanced development. We believe that hastening the preparatory steps may weaken the substantive content of the agreement. If the text is not perfectly balanced, the attendant obligations may not be acceptable. This could also lead to the politicization of the agreement, which would affect the interests of developing nations.

We are confident that, under your wise leadership, Mr. Chairman, our deliberations will lead to a consensus on a final declaration which will take into consideration all concerns in the fields of nuclear disarmament, weapons of mass destruction, and small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): I wish to begin by congratulating you, our good friend the Ambassador of Benin, on your election to the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election. I am fully confident that, under your able leadership, the Commission's deliberations will lead us towards a successful conclusion.

I wish to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his presentation before this Commission and the contribution of his Office to pushing forward the agenda of disarmament. I align my statement with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission provides an innovative and invaluable forum for deliberations on the disarmament agenda. Yet concrete actions and achievements continue to elude the international community. Despite our continued commitment to general and complete disarmament under effective international control, the stocks of conventional and non-conventional weapons alike have hardly diminished substantially and the size of military expenditures continues to increase. This paradoxical state of affairs continues to challenge us to contain the

arms race and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We all know that disarmament is not a choice; it is a compelling security imperative. We have been dedicating precious and finite resources to the production of something that runs against our conscience and undermines our long-term collective security and stability. Global peace and security lie in collective prosperity, not in a race for armaments. This fundamental premise must guide us to make continuous and sustained progress towards disarmament and international security.

We need to redouble our efforts to utilize the Commission as a platform for sincerely pursuing our common goal of disarmament. As a result of our deliberations in this body in the past, we have agreed on the guidelines of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the guidelines on conventional arms control. Similarly, the Commission agreed on the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters, on regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security, and on the guidelines for international arms transfers. It must now be our solemn duty to honour and implement these instruments and to provide further momentum to dealing with the current challenges of contemporary times. It is in this context that my delegation clearly views the need to convene a fourth special session on disarmament to reinvigorate the disarmament process.

We have witnessed horrendous catastrophes wrought by nuclear weapons in the past. It is in this context that my delegation commends the Security Council nuclear summit held on 24 September 2009. We also appreciate the recent progress made by two leading nuclear-weapon States, Russia and the United States, to conclude a post-START agreement. It is imperative that nuclear-weapon States take the responsibility to lead the disarmament efforts from the front.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament. We also need to strengthen the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and move steadily forward with a view to ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons from our planet. The forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT must provide us with a concrete plan of action to achieve a nuclear free world, making simultaneous progress in all three pillars, with the implementation of the 13 practical steps. These three pillars reinforce each other and must be pursued in a holistic manner in order to contribute to creating a stable security environment throughout the world. My delegation stands firmly committed to achieving this goal.

We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones by the various treaties help non-proliferation in the regions. We welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on 21 March 2009 and of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty on 15 July 2009.

My delegation calls for the elimination of chemical, biological and bacteriological weapons in order to achieve the goals of general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction.

Small arms and light weapons have had devastating effects on many developing countries, particularly conflict-ridden countries. The scourge of small arms and light weapons is an imminent threat that requires our urgent actions. We believe that effective implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons would help curb this problem.

My delegation is of the view that the Conference on Disarmament must revive its role as a multilateral disarmament negotiation forum. We deem it extremely important that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty be started in earnest in the Conference on Disarmament.

Nepal attaches high importance to multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation that promote collective ownership, deliberations and responsibility for collective global action. As host of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal believes that unilateral, bilateral and regional efforts and commitments are enabling steps towards promoting disarmament and international security at the global level.

In conclusion, if global peace, stability and prosperity are our collective goals, we must make real progress in disarmament. To achieve this, we need to move ahead to deliver results, ensuring full and effective implementation of all commitments and taking visionary steps in the days ahead. The

Disarmament Commission must be supported by all in taking the lead in that direction.

Mr. Rao (India): It is indeed a pleasure to convey our congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, and we assure you of the full cooperation of the Indian delegation. We would like to convey our appreciation to the Chairs of the two Working Groups, Mr. Paolo Cuculi of Italy and Mr. Johann Paschalis of South Africa, for their diligent efforts.

India associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the representative of Indonesia.

The Disarmament Commission has a unique role as the universal deliberative forum for in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues. When Member States showed the requisite political will, the Commission was able to make consensus recommendations on issues ranging from confidence-building measures to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. India believes that the Commission now has an opportunity, and in fact a responsibility, to once again draw up guidelines and make recommendations of a universal character, reflecting a forward looking vision for a more secure world. The Commission is the universal institutional forum in which to achieve our objectives on the basis of dialogue and consensus.

We are meeting today against the background of considerable excitement and high expectations regarding a new momentum for global nuclear disarmament. At least in terms of aspirations and proposals, nuclear disarmament has moved up on the international agenda. A number of statements have been made by leaders, various commissions and initiatives have presented reports, and scholars, academics and non-governmental organizations have lent their support to nuclear disarmament. The Disarmament Commission should play its rightful role and help make progress towards our shared objective of attaining a world free of nuclear weapons. The Commission can do so by acting as a platform for deliberation resulting in consensus on specific steps that can be taken to realize the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

India continues to attach the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. India has consistently maintained that nuclear weapons can be eliminated through a non-discriminatory and universal convention along the lines of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. Our support for a nuclear weapons convention providing for the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame was reiterated by India's Prime Minister at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly (see A/63/PV.12). This is in keeping with the goal enshrined in the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988.

We welcome the progress achieved in the bilateral negotiations between the United States and Russia on further cuts in their nuclear arsenals. States with substantial arsenals should take meaningful steps towards nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Pending the global and non-discriminatory elimination of nuclear weapons, it is important to take measures to reduce nuclear dangers. Efforts for the expansion of nuclear energy and the reduction of proliferation risks must go hand in hand.

The possibility of terrorist and extremist groups gaining access to nuclear materials is real and could have catastrophic consequences. We are indeed happy that resolutions sponsored by India on this issue in the General Assembly continue to garner wide support. We have in such resolutions sought to highlight these dangers and to stress the need for national and international cooperative measures to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

India has also welcomed the initiative of President Obama to host the Nuclear Security Summit next month to address this global challenge.

India is committed to a voluntary and unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosive testing. We affirm our policy of no first use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States.

As a nuclear-weapon State and a responsible member of the international community, India is prepared to negotiate a multilateral and internationally verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. The obstacles placed to launching these negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament cannot but be a cause for disappointment.

The Conference on Disarmament must also address the priority task of nuclear disarmament. India

has proposed a number of measures that can help in moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. These measures are the following: reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear-weapon States to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons; reduction of the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines; taking into account of the global reach and menace of nuclear weapons, adoption of measures by nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear danger, including the risks of accidental nuclear war, and de-alerting of nuclear weapons to prevent unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons; negotiation of a global agreement among nuclear-weapon States on no first use of nuclear weapons; negotiation of a universal and legally binding agreement on the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; negotiation of a convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; and negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

While it is important that we maintain the momentum in Working Group I, on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we should redouble our efforts to reach consensus this year with regard to Working Group II, on elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade.

We should aim at finding consensus on elements that will be of enduring validity; that uphold the priority of nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction; that address other dimensions of global security, including space security; and that strengthen the international framework for addressing conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, and prevent their being used by terrorists. The Disarmament Commission, as is its tradition, should focus on these issues of security, taking into account the global interdependence of peoples and nations.

We also need a new idiom for conducting the international discourse, which is now no longer confined to States but must take into account the wider constituencies: people's voices from the ground expressed in various ways — through non-governmental organizations, peace activists, scholars and academics. In sum, the elements we draw up must help build a durable foundation for strengthening security in the twenty-first century.

This forum can play its part in revitalizing multilateral institutions and dialogue to build confidence and strengthen international security through multilaterally negotiated, legally binding instruments, and can provide assurances of verifiability, irreversibility, compliance and universality.

We remain committed to ensuring a successful session of the Disarmament Commission over the coming weeks and look forward to working towards that end.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.306

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

306th meeting

Tuesday, 30 March 2010, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Zinsou ..... (Benin)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Zimonyi (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Organization of work

The Acting Chairman: At the outset, I wish to inform delegations that the second revision of the Chair's non-paper for Working Group II has been circulated. Please note that the non-paper is the same version as that which was circulated last year.

I would now like to inform the Commission that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has successfully concluded its consultations and has endorsed two candidates for the vacant posts allocated to it. In that connection, I call on the representative of Panama.

Mr. Tejeira (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I have the honour of informing the Commission that the Group has endorsed Mr. Federico Perazza of Uruguay and Ms. Pía Poroli of Argentina as candidates for the two vice-chairmanships allocated to our Group for the 2010 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The Acting Chairman: I thank the representative of Panama for the nomination of Mr. Federico Perazza of Uruguay and Ms. Pía Poroli of Argentina as vice-chairs of the Commission from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that it is the wish of the Commission to elect Mr. Federico Perazzo of Uruguay and Ms. Pía Poroli as Vice-Chairs of the Disarmament Commission.

It was so decided.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to echo the congratulations to the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau. We also align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Rio Group.

El Salvador believes that there are some encouraging signs that we will be able to take more concrete steps in our common purpose of strengthening the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and promoting confidence-building measures in the sphere of conventional weapons. As we are aware, the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament held last September parallel with the general debate of the General Assembly (see S/PV.6191), generated favourable expectations among the public with regard to the possibility of moving forward in the process of nuclear arms reductions. At the same time, it gave new life towards revitalizing the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

The various verbal commitments made at that meeting by heads of State or Government of the main nuclear Powers with regard to the need for reducing the risk posed by the threat or use of nuclear weapons were received with great enthusiasm by the international

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community. Therefore, we believe that the time has come to open a new stage in our deliberations which will allow us to move towards meeting these commitments.

The Government of El Salvador is firmly committed to contribute to the efforts of the international community to eradicate the threat of nuclear weapons, both for reasons of political and moral principle and because of the imminent danger that their use would pose not only for international peace and security but also for all forms of life. In this context, although we should highlight the importance of the multilateral debate to promote the objectives of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, we also believe that there should be support and encouragement for bilateral talks, negotiations and efforts leading to the achievement of these objectives.

In this vein, we welcomed the approval of a new nuclear arms reduction treaty by the Governments of the United States of America and the Russian Federation. We hope that this treaty will soon be ratified. That would be a major step forward and would encourage other countries to conclude similar negotiations. It should also be added that we are fully confident that substantive progress and, better yet, new commitments in disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation will be achieved at the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington, D.C., in April.

My delegation believes that the major nuclear Powers have a historic opportunity to demonstrate their political will for disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, not only at the Washington Summit but at all international meetings and conferences to be held this year.

We believe that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be held in May is essential to consolidate that instrument. We therefore call on all countries with nuclear weapons or nuclear programmes to state their firm commitment to full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty and with the 13 practical steps agreed upon at the 2000 Review Conference, including submitting to the monitoring and verification regimes set out in the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also call on nuclear-weapon States which are not yet parties to or which have withdrawn from the Treaty to adhere to it as an expression of good faith and mutual and collective confidence.

Thirteen years have passed since the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was opened for signature. Since then, most Member States have signed and ratified the Treaty, although nine Annex 2 countries have yet to ratify it before the Treaty can enter into force. In view of this situation, it is essential to continue making greater bilateral and multilateral efforts to call on those States which have not yet done so, especially Annex 2 States, to promptly sign or ratify the Treaty, as appropriate. In the meantime, those countries should show concrete signs of political will by committing themselves to a moratorium on nuclear tests. We eagerly await the speedy fulfilment of the United States Government's commitment to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Conventional weapons are another particularly important issue on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission and, in this respect, allow me to refer in particular to the theme of small arms and light weapons. For my country, as for most developing countries, this is a high priority issue for the safety of our citizens. This is not only because we deplore the harmful effects of the illicit traffic in small arms itself and its links with drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and gangs, but even more so because of its severe effects on economic development and social peace in general, which are an issue of great concern.

I note that most of the delegations that spoke before me clearly indicated their full awareness of the imperative need to combine our efforts and will to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. The Security Council itself has given particular importance to this topic, and its members have expressly recognized that the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has today become a decisive element in the exacerbation of military conflicts, armed violence and severe violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. These views are also shared and have been expanded by specialized agencies of the United Nations system. These include the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, which has indicated that the effects of this scourge against the rule of law, democracy and economic and social development are frequently worrying.

In this context, we believe it is imperative that the issue of the illicit traffic of small arms light weapons be considered as a priority on the agenda of the Commission and be included in the negotiations of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty as a response to the wishes of most delegations present here.

To conclude, allow me to reaffirm the firm commitment and support of the Government of El Salvador to initiatives aimed at strengthening the efforts of the majority of the countries of the international community to achieve a safer, more peaceful world for the benefit of our peoples.

Mr. Hong Je Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to make a statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who is unable to be present at this meeting.

On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Zinsou on his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at this session. I sincerely wish him every success. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As usual, nuclear disarmament is the highest priority in the field of disarmament. While there are nuclear weapons in the world, humankind will never be free of the danger of nuclear war. Had nuclear weapons not been developed, there would be no concern about their proliferation.

As we are all aware, the United States was the world's first country to develop and use nuclear weapons. Several countries have opted to take the path towards becoming nuclear-weapon States since the United States first manufactured and used nuclear weapons in actual warfare without hesitation. Their number has now increased to nine. That undeniable fact proves that the ringleader of nuclear proliferation is none other than the United States.

Even today, the United States is stepping up its modernization of nuclear weapons. That, in turn, has led to a nuclear arms race among nuclear Powers. Although the United States is advocating a nuclear-weapon-free world, its ambition to monopolize nuclear weapons shows no sign of changing, as manifested by its adoption of what is called an extended deterrence policy.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has played no role in either nuclear disarmament or the elimination of nuclear threats. Non-nuclear-weapon States placed high expectations on the NPT at the time of its conclusion. If anything, the NPT put in place and justified the current exclusive status of nuclear Powers. More than 40 years of the process of implementing the NPT illustrate beyond doubt that the Treaty is extremely discriminatory and unfair, and thus deceptive not only in terms of its substance but also in the light of its application so far.

The ceaseless efforts of developing countries to achieve the ultimate goal of the comprehensive and complete dismantlement of nuclear weapons are based on their firm belief that this is the only way to fundamentally resolve the issue of nuclear proliferation and to save humankind from the danger of nuclear war. The nuclear Powers, including the United States, should not seek a monopoly over nuclear weapons. Rather, they should embark on dismantling them without further delay as demanded unanimously by international society, including non-aligned countries. They should also demonstrate a modicum of will for nuclear disarmament by withdrawing nuclear threats and providing negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States at the earliest possible date.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is an inevitable outcome of the hostile policy of the United States, which has continued for more than half a century. The United States began to blackmail the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons at the time of the Korean War, between 1950 and 1953. In 1957, the United States introduced nuclear weapons into South Korea, thereby seriously endangering the sovereignty and right to existence of my country. Beginning in the early 2000s, it attempted to eliminate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by designating it as part of an axis of evil and a target of nuclear pre-emptive strikes.

Last year, the United States began to incite an international campaign for sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by labelling our satellite launch as a threat to international peace. Our satellite launch was in full conformity with all procedures and requirements of international law. This month, the

United States maximized its nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by conducting test nuclear-war manoeuvres, such as the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises with South Korean forces.

Likewise, the United States is leaving no means untried to bring down the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including through military threats, economic sanctions and ideological and cultural poisoning. That fact indicates that, although there was regime change in the United States, there has been no change in its Administration's hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to bring down by force the ideology and system chosen by our people. Any country would do the same as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if its supreme interests were constantly threatened.

Denuclearizing the Korean peninsula is the goal of the policy pursued invariably by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As part of our sincere efforts to bring back on track the current deadlocked process of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea proposed to the parties concerned an early start of the talks for replacing the armistice agreement with a peace treaty this year, which marks 60 years since the outbreak of the Korean War.

The course of the Six-Party Talks for denuclearizing the peninsula has experienced repeated frustrations and failures because of the absence of confidence among the parties concerned. No issue can ever be settled without confidence. Even friendly countries sometimes find it difficult to resolve a problem for lack of confidence between them. How much more can we then say about the relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, given that we have now been in a state of war in which our countries have levelled guns at each other for more than 60 years?

It would be nonsensical for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sit at the negotiating table with those countries that violate its sovereignty and allow it to be repeatedly encroached upon, and to discuss with them the deterrent it built to defend its own sovereignty. There is no precedent, in the absence of confidence between them, for one belligerent party to put down its guns before the other does so. The minimum confidence measure required for denuclearizing the Korean peninsula is the conclusion of a peace treaty.

The fact that one party took issue even with a satellite launch for peaceful purposes occurred because there was no confidence among the parties concerned. The extreme encroachment upon the sovereignty of a country represented by the discriminatory objection to a satellite launch compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take the self-defensive countermeasure of conducting a nuclear test. The resulting sanctions have caused such a vicious cycle of distrust as to bring the Six-Party Talks to collapse. It is the purport of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's proposal for concluding a peace treaty to put an end to such vicious cycles of distrust and build confidence to push forward denuclearization.

The conclusion of a peace treaty is the only realistic way to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. If a peace treaty is concluded, nuclear and war threats are removed and the vision of the United States President for a nuclear-weapon-free world is realized, we will not need even a single nuclear weapon. If the United States pursues dialogue and sanctions in parallel, we will counter with dialogue and the strengthening of our deterrent. We hope that the United States will accept our realistic proposal, thus bringing about the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group, it is my pleasure to extend to Ambassador Zinsou our sincere congratulations on the trust reflected in his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 2010 session. We trust that his chairmanship will be a success. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Rapporteur for the current session. The Arab Group also fully supports the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In recent decades, there has been mounting concern in the international community about the growing dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Selective and unfair policies to address this issue have led to the stockpiling of appalling arsenals and to the development of new lethal weapons in more than one country without regard for the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT). In spite of the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, what we see in reality is a reflection of the shortcomings of the Treaty in the area of nuclear disarmament. We have also witnessed the pursuit of double standards in various areas of nuclear non-proliferation, as well as efforts by some Powers to restrict the inherent right of non-nuclear-weapon States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to use it for development and scientific progress.

In addition to the incomplete implementation of the provisions of the Treaty to date, the Arab Group is particularly concerned about the failure by Israel and other Member States, including the three depositary States that sponsored the resolution, to heed and implement the resolution on the Middle East.

The Arab Group welcomes the recent positive statements made by a number of nuclear-weapon State leaders in which they expressed their intention to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and to revitalize international efforts aimed at moving from nuclear non-proliferation to nuclear disarmament. Our Group looks forward to these statements being translated into real action in the form of resolutions and deeds that transform the nuclear disarmament process and achieve credibility for the non-proliferation system and for the universality of the NPT in order to realize regional and international security. The recent announcement of an agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation aimed at mutual reductions in their nuclear arsenals is perhaps a step forward towards serious international comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

Despite that, some nuclear-weapon States do not take their commitments to nuclear non-proliferation seriously in terms of achieving nuclear disarmament. In fact, they violate their international commitments and flout their pledges to non-nuclear-weapon States. The most glaring evidence of such violations is the continued cooperation of some nuclear-weapon countries with Israel in the nuclear field. More serious is the fact that some States parties to the NPT give exemptions to States that are not parties to the Treaty without the legal authority to take such unilateral decisions, which contravene their Treaty obligations, the resolutions adopted at the review conferences and the indefinite extension of the NPT.

The failure of some international parties to follow up on the implementation of the decisions and outcomes of previous NPT review conferences and the distinctions they make among their commitments seriously jeopardize the credibility of the NPT. Here, we would cite in particular the Middle East resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. We reiterate that the indefinite extension of the NPT regime would not have been achieved by consensus without that resolution, which provided for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Unfortunately, the Middle East — the only region of the world that has seen no serious international effort to make it a nuclear-weapon-free zone — continues to be the flagrant case that proves the inefficiency of the NPT in achieving security for its State parties. That encourages Israel to acquire military nuclear capabilities outside any international supervisory system.

In this regard, we would caution against the dangers of international silence on the Israeli nuclear position. Israel has shifted from a policy of ambiguity on the nuclear issue to one of making public statements on its possession of nuclear weapons. These statements have been met by a strange silence on the part of the international community that reflects passive acceptance of this anomalous situation, which has made the peoples of the region lose faith in the concept of nuclear non-proliferation.

These events have revitalized the possibility of a nuclear arms race despite the series of consensual General Assembly resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that stress the dangers of Israel possessing nuclear weapons. This has also happened despite the fact that, on 29 December 2003, the Arab Group submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council on making the region free of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, that draft resolution has yet to be adopted or implemented.

The Arab Group supports moving actively towards the implementation of the 13 steps proposed at the Review Conference in 2000 and the commitment to reducing nuclear weapons in a verifiable and irreversible manner within a multilateral international framework, while stressing the need for a legally binding formula to ensure the safety of non-nuclear-

weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Our Group would also like to stress that the right of States to acquire nuclear technology and to use it for peaceful purposes is an inalienable right under article IV of the NPT.

The only way to achieve the universality of the NPT and to avert the dangers of nuclear weapons proliferation is if all Member States accede to the Treaty and implement article III, which calls on States parties to reach comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

All countries of the Middle East have acceded to the NPT except for Israel, the only State in the region that has nuclear military capabilities. It is essential that the international community recognize the anxiety of the peoples of the region regarding Israel's nuclear military capabilities. Those capabilities have been cited in the reports of relevant international forums, including Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 487 (1981), which expressly calls on Israel to subject all its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime and invites the IAEA to stop its scientific assistance to Israel. The most recent resolutions in this regard are General Assembly resolutions 64/26 and 64/66, which reiterated the importance of the need for Israel to accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA in order to achieve the universality of the Treaty.

Here I would like to highlight the Doha declaration adopted by Arab leaders on 30 March 2009 and the Sirte summit declaration adopted at the Arab summit on 28 March, in line with Security Council resolution 487 (1981). The declarations state explicitly that the international community is called upon to make the Middle East region free from all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to compel Israel to accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to the IAEA safeguards regime.

Currently, the international community is preparing to declare a fourth disarmament decade, during which we would like to build on the achievements of past decades and make progress on those initiatives that have already been undertaken. We believe that the agreed elements of the fourth decade must reflect the ongoing priority of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international efforts to achieve arms reductions, disarmament and non-proliferation in a universal, balanced and non-discriminatory manner.

The Arab Group would like to stress that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as those established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Central Asia, in addition to the status of Mongolia as a nuclear-weapon-free State, are all positive and important steps to bolster nuclear disarmament and its non-proliferation at the global level.

In this context, the Arab Group welcomes the second Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, scheduled to be held in New York on 30 April 2010. It should be recalled that the resolution on the Middle East was part of a package agreed upon at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Furthermore, there is a close link between the indefinite extension of the NPT, on the one hand, and the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, on the other.

In this regard, the Arab Group welcomes the support voiced by the international community and the importance it has attached to the adoption, at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, of practical measures aimed at the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. While we welcome the measures that have been and will be proposed by a number of countries, we note that all such steps must be closely tied to the NPT framework and avoid linking other subjects or frameworks with the Treaty, because that would cause rather than rectify an imbalance in nuclear commitments.

With regard to the agenda item entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", the Arab Group emphasizes the need to adopt effective measures that contribute to international peace and security while giving due consideration to the sovereignty of States, their rights to self-defence and to non-interference in their internal affairs, and the need to consider the particular security and defence needs of each region. The Arab Group asserts that confidence-building measures cannot be a substitute for or precondition of disarmament, despite their relevance to the creation of a climate conducive to disarmament and arms monitoring, so long as they

are adopted in a balanced and inc'usive manner in various regions of the world.

Our Group also supports all unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures to reduce military expenditure. Such measures contribute to regional and international peace and security.

The most important criterion for the credibility of practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons lies in the just resolution of military conflicts unencumbered by the hidden agendas of some influential countries that export conventional weapons. The situation in the Middle East is the most important example in this regard. The Israeli occupation of Arab territories is supported directly by some major countries that export conventional weapons. In fact, some of these countries are involved in joint ventures with the Israeli military industry to develop and export such weapons technology to foreign markets. This encourages Israel not to accept the hand of peace extended to it by the Arab Group and to continue its occupation of Arab territories, its daily violations of international humanitarian law and the escalation of tension in the region.

Finally, the Arab Group calls for full compliance with and the optimum implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Full international support for and compliance with this instrument is important for the success of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to be held in July 2010, which will optimally bolster the Programme at both the regional and the international levels.

Ms. Mourabit (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to convey to Ambassador Zinsou the sincere congratulations of my delegation upon Benin's assumption of the chairmanship of this important deliberative body, the Disarmament Commission. Benin — a friendly and brotherly African country — may rest assured, as should the members of the Bureau, of the full support of my delegation.

I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome the participation in the work of the Disarmament Commission of High Representative Sergio Duarte and, through him, to thank the entire Office for Disarmament Affairs team for their praiseworthy work throughout the year in following up on and managing disarmament issues.

Before setting out the areas my delegation will address in this statement, I should like to associate myself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf by the Non-Aligned Movement; of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group; and of Qatar on behalf of the Arab Group.

The Disarmament Commission is meeting once again with a feeling of uncertainty, despite the glimmer of hope inspired last year by the statements made by certain nuclear States favouring progress in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Without a doubt, there is an acute need to move beyond the legacy of a difficult international situation that had negative effects on the United Nations disarmament machinery, which was at a standstill for several years.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco, which has signed and ratified all the multilateral instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), remains committed to the strengthening of that fundamental instrument, which aims at nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and guarantees the right of its States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Morocco also welcomes the decision taken by the United States of America and Russia with a view to their pending signature of a new START agreement on the reduction of the number of their nuclear warheads. This agreement will constitute a historic step for the realization of general and complete nuclear disarmament.

Furthermore, while we appreciate the importance of the bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements on disarmament, Morocco calls on this Commission to proceed with multilateral negotiations, as envisioned in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

As co-Chair with France of the sixth annual Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on 24 and 25 September last year, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to that Treaty, which is a fundamental instrument of the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

With the uncertainty prevailing in our world today, dominated by the growing threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including those of nuclear terrorism, the entry into force of the CTBT is now more than ever a matter of urgency and a priority for the international community. The Kingdom of Morocco thus takes this opportunity to call on all countries that have not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty in order to ensure its universality. We also urge annex 2 countries to ratify it as soon as possible so as to enable the Treaty finally to enter into force and realize its objectives.

While it encourages unilateral and bilateral initiatives aimed at the reduction of nuclear arsenals, Morocco remains convinced of the importance of strengthening the multilateral approach to general and complete nuclear disarmament as the only way of protecting ourselves against the danger that these weapons represent, be it through their use, failure to secure them or their acquisition by non-State actors and by terrorists.

Morocco calls for respect for article VI of the NPT and urges States to reflect seriously on the merits of concluding an international convention for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and, to that end, to create immediately within the Conference on Disarmament a subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament.

My delegation would also like to address the other important item on our agenda, namely the item on the draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. While we are entering the fourth disarmament decade this year, we cannot do so without taking a look at what our predecessors achieved during previous Decades.

I am referring to the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, of 1978, whose Final Document (resolution S-10/2) included important recommendations for general and complete disarmament. I refer also to the Decade of the 1980s, which focused on ending the arms race and enshrining the concept of the indivisibility of peace and development, and to the third Decade, the 1990s, when confidence-building measures, dialogue and negotiation were recognized as a means to achieve the objectives of disarmament. To its credit, that Decade saw the conclusion of the CTBT as a significant instrument for implementing a systematic process leading to nuclear disarmament and reaffirmed the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT to the civilian use of nuclear energy within the framework of the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Kingdom of Morocco would therefore like to see in the elements of the draft declaration of a fourth disarmament decade substantive recommendations in the areas of both nuclear disarmament and conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons.

Morocco devotes particular attention to the issue of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. It considers that the issue of conventional weapons, in particular the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, is a leading challenge and is a threat, indeed an obstacle, to reform and development efforts, especially on our African continent.

The absence of regulations and monitoring of the use, transfer and stockpiling of these weapons contributes to their uncontrolled proliferation in hot spots of tension which leads to unsustainable consequences for the stability and security of States as well as for their socio-economic and human development.

Aside from the important efforts made at the national level which have now enabled it to exercise a high degree of control over the management of these weapons, the Kingdom of Morocco is very much involved in the international community's efforts in this area. My country has a great interest in ensuring that this session of the Disarmament Commission will yield the broadest consensus possible on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

As I come to the end of my statement, my delegation would like to express its hope that over the coming three weeks we will all be able to rise to the challenge and agree on recommendations concerning decisions necessary for strengthening the multilateral disarmament system.

Mrs. Ancidey (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin my statement by congratulating Ambassador Zinsou on his election as Chair of the Commission for its 2010 substantive session. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group.

The opening of the work of the Disarmament Commission is once again framed within a process where great expectations for nuclear disarmament are being harboured but are not becoming reality. We are still awaiting realization of the announcements made in 2009.

The latest events on the disarmament agenda only reaffirm once again that dealing with this issue is without any doubt a question of political will. For this reason, today more than ever, the Disarmament Commission, the deliberative body of the disarmament machinery, is a fundamental space in which to exchange opinions and positions on nuclear disarmament with a view to formulating recommendations to the General Assembly. Nevertheless, we note with concern that for some years the Commission has not been able to attain concrete results.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates once again its commitment to reaching a world free of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, we recognize that that is the direct path towards ensuring that humankind does not live under threat, shadowed by the possible use of such weapons. General and complete nuclear disarmament is an objective intrinsically linked to the building of a world where peace reigns.

Venezuela is convinced that international efforts in the area of general and complete disarmament must take place at the same time as realizing the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation, both horizontal and vertical. This is an interdependent process which will not make progress until the nuclear Powers, first and foremost, adopt concrete actions and comply with the commitments they have made.

After the fifth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), at which an indefinite extension of the Treaty was agreed upon, we harboured the hope that States parties would work together to make progress in the area of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

This feeling became stronger after the sixth Conference, at which the implementation of practical steps for disarmament was agreed upon. Unfortunately, these objectives were frustrated due to the lack of political will of some nuclear Powers which avoid honouring their international commitments. This situation has negatively affected the climate of dialogue, understanding and confidence which should reign in multilateral forums charged with negotiating multilateral disarmament agreements and measures.

My delegation calls once again upon nuclear-weapon States to comply with the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, more specifically with those of article VI. At the same time, we reject the selective application of that instrument. Respect for and compliance with the three pillars of the Treaty are indispensable for attaining the balance necessary for strengthening the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Venezuela reaffirms its concern at the strategic defence doctrines which nuclear Powers now consider to be indispensable for the promotion and development of military alliances and in military deterrence policies. Given to such provisions, we wonder how the international community can develop confidence-building measures for disarmament and non-proliferation if we are bogged down in processes marked by deep mistrust exacerbated by these doctrines.

The next NPT Review Conferences represents an opportunity to reach concrete results that will benefit humanity in general and not just a select group. We sorely need to agree upon a universal and legally binding international instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States such as my own. We should also urgently deal with a set of measures to take concrete agreed actions to fully eliminate nuclear weapons within a specific time frame.

Venezuela believes that agreeing on a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade will have a very positive influence on ongoing international efforts to meet the challenges in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, we know that it will become an effective tool to ensure a safer life for the peoples we represent here.

My delegation is at the Chairman's disposal for the full success of his work and that of the Commission.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): My delegation wishes to congratulate Mr. Zinsou on his assumption of

the position as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and to assure him of South Africa's full support. We associate ourselves with the statements delivered by our colleagues from Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Multilateralism, with the United Nations and its Charter at the centre, remains central to any effort to find sustainable solutions to the challenges to international peace and security. South Africa therefore continues to attach great value to the work of the Disarmament Commission, with its mandate as the sole deliberative body of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Regarding the first substantive agenda item, the Commission's work takes place in an international environment that is marked by both important new developments and enduring challenges in the areas of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. South Africa remains guided by the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, informed by the principle that the only credible guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons is their total elimination.

South Africa attaches great importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. South Africa stresses the importance of the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and hopes for a forward-looking outcome that advances all three pillars of the Treaty in a balanced manner without losing the gains of the past. With the review coming 40 years after the entry into force of the Treaty and 20 years after the end of the cold war, it will be important to leave the next Review Conference with a common agreement on advancing the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

South Africa is of the view that the established instruments in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament can effectively address the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Universal adherence to, full implementation of and compliance with these international instruments, along with the complete and early elimination of these weapons, will guarantee that they will never be used.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a pressing goal and a non-negotiable commitment, and South Africa will work with all concerned to achieve the earliest entry into force of this important element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

South Africa welcomes the positive developments in the Conference on Disarmament that led to the consensus adoption of a programme of work, but it is disappointed that the Conference could not agree on the modalities for the implementation of the decision. We call upon all Conference members to ensure an early start to substantive work in the Conference. Negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty may, we hope, soon be a reality. We trust that the deliberations in Working Group I will contribute to consensus in this important area under the leadership of its very capable Chair.

Security remains one of the most fundamental aspirations of humankind. The United Nations Charter is in fact premised on the notion of collective security with the right to self-defence explicitly enshrined. History has shown that the traditional approach of seeking security through the acquisition of the most advanced weapons and the build-up of huge armies has led to numerous devastating wars, including two devastating world wars.

The excessive accumulation of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, beyond legitimate self-defence purposes, has the potential to create or perpetuate the vicious cycle of instability and conflict, on the one hand, and poverty and underdevelopment on the other. Confidence-building measures could play an important role in preventing or addressing this downward spiral.

South Africa looks forward to the fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. South Africa had the honour, together with Colombia and Japan, to introduce the omnibus small arms resolution in the General Assembly in 2009 which, we believe, establishes a forward-looking programme of work through 2012. South Africa believes that there is still room for improved cooperation on the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as on illicit brokering.

South Africa will continue to work with Member States towards the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to be held in 2012 in order to consider the important questions and modalities that remain to be resolved, including the details of the most appropriate regulatory framework to be adopted. Any further delay in regulating conventional arms transfers will continue to undermine efforts to address human rights abuses, the displacement of the innocent and oppression, and will undermine development goals.

South Africa continues to attach great importance to the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, both of which are aimed at addressing the human suffering inflicted by these indiscriminate weapons on civilian populations.

South Africa finally welcomes the inclusion of the item "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade" on the Commission's substantive agenda. This item will allow us to collectively develop that broader vision of a common purpose, which has been lacking in recent times and which would allow us to consolidate the positive developments while addressing the substantial challenges in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to congratulate the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their election to conduct the work of the Disarmament Commission for this session. We wish them success in their tasks and assure them of our support.

Allow me at the outset to associate myself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Arab States and Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States, as well as that delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya reaffirms its commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We are ready to make every effort to achieve total disarmament and are firmly committed to the objectives of the Disarmament Commission. We recognize the Commission's central role in conducting constructive deliberations that lead to resolutions and recommendations that will contribute to strengthening the efforts of the disarmament machinery.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which are a top priority for the peace and security of humankind and its future, Libya affirms the need to achieve balance in the implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which are nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology. These issues must be addressed in a non-discriminatory manner in order to preserve the efficiency and credibility of the Treaty.

We believe in emphasizing nuclear non-proliferation, especially horizontal non-proliferation, and that downplaying the importance of nuclear disarmament or restricting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology would cause great alarm and cast doubt on the credibility of the Treaty and its implementation in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner, especially in view of the presence of nuclear arsenals that threaten the presence of human life on the entire planet.

Libya, which voluntarily renounced its weapons of mass destruction programme and equipment in 2003, emphasizes the fact that the NPT remains key to realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We also stress that it has now become more urgent than ever for nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments and undertake the necessary practical measures to dismantle their nuclear weapons in accordance with the provisions of article VI of the NPT. They must also commit themselves to implementing the outcomes of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 13 practical steps that were adopted at the 2000 Review Conference, and comply with the provisions of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

The credibility of the NPT can be consolidated only through the commitment of all parties, especially nuclear-weapon States, to honouring all of its articles. We acknowledge the momentum that resulted from the remarks of some of the leading nuclear Powers last year, in which they declared their commitment to working to realize the objective towards which we are all striving — the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons. We note in particular the declaration by President Obama of the United States of America and President Medvedev of the Russian Federation of their intention to conclude a legally binding and verifiable agreement to replace the START Treaty. We are, however, still awaiting the translation of those

declarations into practical, tangible measures and results that would make a difference to reducing nuclear arsenals in an internationally verifiable and transparent manner.

Political will and genuine resolve are essential if we are to fully eradicate all nuclear weapons, which would be the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. We must therefore strengthen efforts to realize the universality of the NPT through the adherence of all countries and their total commitment to all its provisions. All States must also seek to apply the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards regime to all nuclear activities and installations in a non-discriminatory fashion. It is our hope that the Disarmament Commission will take the appropriate and objective measures required in this respect.

As we approach the NPT Review Conference, it is our hope that we will have constructive deliberations and that adopt concrete and decisive measures. It is our view that the Conference will be a genuine opportunity to put the commitment of nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States to the test, and for them to prove their credibility and seriousness with regard to their declared initiatives aimed at attaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

Libya is of the view that the time has come for us to start working to strengthen the commitments emanating from the NPT by enhancing the text of the Treaty itself. Libya has therefore prepared and submitted to the Secretariat prior to the Review Conference a working paper that includes proposed amendments to the text of the Treaty with the aim of securing guarantees from nuclear States that they will work towards complete nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international supervision and verification. We have addressed letters to the depository States of the NPT requesting that they call a meeting of the States parties to the Treaty to consider the amendments that we have proposed to article VI of the Treaty. It is our hope that the depository States will circulate this request to all the parties to the Treaty and that the proposals will receive positive consideration within the context of constructive dialogue aimed at securing optimum and balanced implementation of the NPT.

In addition, Libya is of the view that we should also work urgently to conclude a legally binding and unconditional international instrument to guarantee the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Such guarantees would no doubt enhance the implementation of the NPT.

We support and encourage all efforts and treaties related to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world. We welcome the recent developments and entry into force of the Treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and Central Asia. We have no doubt that the approach of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones will strengthen the universality of the NPT and contribute to the realization of international peace and security.

Regrettably, the matter of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East remains at a standstill, with no tangible steps to implement such a zone as a result of Israeli intransigence and the lack of necessary international measures in this respect. This in turn is cause for great concern among the States and peoples of the region. Here it may be useful to recall that the agreement on the indefinite extension of the NPT could not have been achieved by consensus without the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East in 1995. That resolution called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, the Middle East remains the only region that has seen no real international effort to rid it of nuclear weapons, which encourages the Israeli entity to continue acquiring military nuclear capabilities outside all international supervision. It is also a cause of concern that there is continued cooperation in the nuclear field between some nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT and the Israeli entity, which reflects a grave imbalance in the implementation of the commitments of the Treaty by those States, the decisions of the review conferences and the provisions of the indefinite extension of the NPT.

Therefore, it is imperative that the international community exert without delay the necessary pressure on the Israeli entity to join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party and to subject its facilities and activities to the supervision of the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. These steps are necessary to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

With regard to the agenda item on a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, we wish to emphasize that the elements of the declaration must be based on the progress achieved in previous decades and that they should take into consideration the important steps to be taken in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. This applies to conventional weapons as well.

Libya emphasizes the importance of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The confidence-building measures should be balanced and take into consideration the specific security and defence characteristics and realities of every region. We must respect the recognized principles of the rights of Member States to acquire weapons for self-defence and to resist foreign occupation, the sovereignty of Member States and non-interference in their internal affairs. These are basic, crucial issues, especially given the situation in the Middle East, which has endured the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories for several decades, despite all the concessions and peace initiatives offered by the Arab side.

The situation in the Middle East highlights the fact that confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons cannot be implemented in a practical manner unless the Palestinian people are able to enjoy their inalienable rights and obtain a just and comprehensive solution, especially in view of the support that the Israeli entity receives from some weapons-producing countries.

Libya emphasizes the importance of commitment to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and it is our hope that we will continue building on progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize that multilateral cooperation and serious political will are two critical elements in continuing forward and effectively realizing the objectives of disarmament. It is incumbent on all of us to work together, learn from the lessons of the past and benefit from the rapid developments in the international arena in order to realize a world that is safe and prosperous for future generation.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Given the recent encouraging developments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, this session's work, after many frustrating years, will be critical to achieving our disarmament agenda. This is because the political will necessary to making a difference is increasing in major capitals.

The resumption of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, after many years of stalemate, is surely a welcome development. We are also encouraged by the pronouncements emanating from different capitals on their promises to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda in a substantial manner. As the President of the first session of 2010, Bangladesh tried its best to bring all parties together. The outcome of the first session was appreciated by all of the member countries.

Bangladesh has never had any doubt that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Security Council has just reconfirmed that. Bangladesh reiterates its call, as reflected also in Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), that States that are not parties to the NPT should accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States so as to achieve its universality at an early date, and, pending their accession to the Treaty, to adhere to its terms.

Bangladesh calls for the adoption of a balanced approach in addressing the three pillars of the NPT: nuclear disarmament of countries currently possessing nuclear weapons, non-proliferation to countries not yet in possession, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy for all. Bangladesh also reiterates its call on all States, particularly the remaining annex 2 nations, to refrain from conducting nuclear test explosions and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Bangladesh was the first annexed South Asian nation to join the CTBT. We are convinced that the universalization and entry into force of the CTBT at an early date are critical building blocks of a nuclear-free world.

Bangladesh also calls upon the parties to the NPT, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty, to undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear arms reduction and disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control; it also calls on all other States to join in this endeavour. We look forward to the NPT Review Conference of 2010 for a balanced outcome in all of the Treaty's three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Bangladesh supports the Secretary-General's five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament. Based on the Inter-Parliamentary Union resolution adopted in April 2009, the Parliament of Bangladesh is going to pass a resolution supporting nuclear and general disarmament.

Bangladesh, a country constitutionally committed to peace and to general and complete disarmament, enjoys an impeccable record in disarmament and non-proliferation, in nuclear as well as in conventional weapons. We are party to almost all United Nations disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. Within our limited resources, we endeavour to ensure their full implementation at the national, regional and international levels.

We would like to emphasize here that, while we support all non-discriminatory efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Bangladesh recognizes the inalienable right, as stipulated article IV of NPT, of the parties to the Treaty to develop the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of that Treaty. For example, Bangladesh has consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. However, under the guidance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), we are currently working to make good use of the NPT provision on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to improve the living standards of our people. As part of our commitment to non-proliferation, Bangladesh has also concluded a Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, including an Additional Protocol.

While we must continue to work to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the face of planet Earth, we must not lose sight of the perennial threats posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. Bangladesh lends its support to the global effort to conclude an arms trade treaty to ensure the transparent transfer of conventional weapons.

Bangladesh also calls for putting an end to the use of anti-personnel landmines. Many civilians, including children and women, have fallen victim to landmines in conflict and post-conflict situations. Bangladesh has fulfilled its obligations under the Landmine Convention by destroying its own stockpile. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Ottawa Convention. Assistance should also be extended to mine clearing operations, as well as for the rehabilitation of victims in affected countries.

We have good reason to be more hopeful than ever about making progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, as well as about the NPT Review Conference to be held in May of this year. This can indeed be a time to look beyond what had been perceived to be achievable all these years and to work for an ambitious disarmament agenda to make the planet a safer place for all of us and for future generations.

The Acting Chairman: We have now exhausted the list of speakers. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind delegations that the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two. The first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes, and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Park Chul-min (Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise my right of reply to make some clarifications regarding the false allegation made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in his general statement.

The Chairman took the Chair.

With regard to the military exercises mentioned by that representative, I would like to clarify that those exercises were our annual joint military exercises, which are purely defensive in nature. The remarks by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are groundless. My delegation believes there would be no merit in repeating the established facts.

With respect to the peace treaty, all issues concerning the Korean peninsula should be discussed thoroughly by the core parties, including the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to recall that the Joint Statement of the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks, issued in September 2005, clearly articulates that principle. My delegation would like to remind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the expeditious denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the key to creating an environment in which to discuss a peace regime.

Mr. Hong Je Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): With regard to the statement just made by the South Korean representative, we think it has no value and is not worthy of consideration. The South Korean Government is used to claiming that their joint military exercises against its compatriots are always defensive. If they are really defensive in nature, what are they defending against? My country is a small and peace-loving country. No country would believe that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would attack South Korea, which is solely supported by the super-Power, which is the United States. The military exercises are actually aimed at other countries. That is part of the United States strategy in North-East Asia.

With regard to a peacekeeping treaty, yes we have proposed to the parties concerned the conclusion of such a treaty. We agree that this treaty should be discussed among the parties concerned. The main purpose of this proposal is to build confidence among the parties concerned, in particular between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. The peace treaty would replace the Armistice Agreement that was signed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China and the United States — at that time on behalf of the United Nations. At the time of the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement, South Korea was strongly against that conclusion. I have a lot of things to say with regard to this treaty but, because of time constraints, I shall not elaborate further.

Instead, I should like to return to the statement made by the South Korean representative this morning. In his statement, our South Korean colleague said that he wanted to highlight the importance of an early resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue. From our perspective, our possession of nuclear weapons is not the issue. If our possession of nuclear weapons becomes an issue, what about the nuclear weapons possessed by other countries? What becomes the issue is the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. And the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula does not at all mean the unilateral abandonment of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula should cover first of all the withdrawal of nuclear weapons of the United States from South Korea. Secondly, it should cover the issue of withdrawing the United States nuclear umbrella over South Korea. Denuclearization should also cover the total elimination of nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Apart from those issues, there are a lot of other issues to be covered: it is a long list. The list is too long to remember.

In the statement, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was also urged to return promptly to the Six-Party Talks. The truth is that the Six-Party Talks have reached an impasse: they have collapsed. The Six-Party Talks were made to collapse by those countries that are currently calling for their early resumption; South Korea is one of them. The United States, Japan and South Korea forced the Security Council to adopt a sanctions resolution against my country, simply because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a satellite.

They say that our satellite launch was a missile launch that constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Now, the question arises: if our satellite launch is a threat to international peace and security, what about the other satellite launches? Do they not pose a threat to international peace and security? I want my South Korean colleague to answer that question.

He also mentioned that we have to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and implement the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement. First of all, I reiterate my Government's position totally rejecting those Security Council resolutions. These Security Council's resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are in contravention of the United Nations Charter and international law. We launched a satellite in full conformity with the requirements of international law. Security Council resolutions cannot supersede international law or the United Nations Charter. They are not legally binding at all, at least

vis-à-vis the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As to the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement, we have fully implemented all our obligations under the Statement. But the other countries have failed to implement their respective obligations.

The representative of South Korea also mentioned the so-called grand bargain initiative. First of all, I am not aware of that initiative. I do not understand what it really means. I am not a good businessman. I am from a socialist system. We people from socialist countries are not as good at bargaining as the South Korean people, who are capitalists. Our nuclear weapon is not a bargaining chip; it is the inevitable outcome of United States hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, if the United States abandons and puts an end to its existing hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the nuclear issue would be resolved smoothly. We have to keep these nuclear weapons as long as the United States continues its nuclear policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): There are no other requests for the floor. We have thus exhausted the list of speakers for this afternoon's meeting. I would like to thank all delegations who participated in the general exchange of views, which was very productive. I should now like to make some closing remarks to summarize the work we have done over the past two days.

We have now come to the end of the general exchange of views, during which delegations have unambiguously expressed their concerns, expectations and priorities for this session of the Disarmament Commission and for the current three-year cycle. I noted in particular the great satisfaction of delegations with regard to the finalization of the agreement on reducing weapon stockpiles that was negotiated between the United States and the Russian Federation. That agreement, whose signing has been announced for 8 April, marks a decisive turning point and a clear break with the paralysis that has characterized the disarmament track in the course of the past decade. It injects dynamism into the thaw that has been taking place with regard to peace and security issues for several months.

Members also highlighted the importance of deadlines on the disarmament timetable and the need to complete the work of this session to set the negotiations that are to take place on a promising course. In particular, members underscored their hope that the Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will strengthen the Treaty's three pillars. Likewise, the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit also drew members' attention, as did the fourth Biennial Meeting on Small Arms.

I also noted a desire for the changes that have arisen in language and discussion to become real actions that will ensure equal security for all. Members called for pursuing efforts in the area of reducing nuclear stockpiles, as well as for a cessation of the proliferation of those weapons in all its forms.

Many delegations also called for negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. They also reiterated the need to bring about the universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to conclude a cut-off treaty on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and a convention on the elimination of nuclear weapons, in order to realize our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. Members also reiterated their support for, and commitment to, nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Delegations emphasized the need to make progress on the ground with regard to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, without which it would be difficult to ensure the regional peace and stability that are necessary for progress on disarmament issues.

Many delegations emphasized the need to find ways to reduce military spending in order to free up further resources for development.

I shall not recount here all the essential points of view expressed by member States during the 40-odd statements made before the Commission. I have just given a brief summary of the general exchange of reviews, which yielded a wealth of ideas that will be of benefit to the documents currently being drafted in the two Working Groups. Many delegations expressed a desire that the Commission should take advantage of the time allotted to it to make progress in addressing the items assigned to the Commission's two Working Groups.

Members encouraged me, as Chairman, to spare no effort to ensure that we maximize the chances for

the success of the current three-year cycle. They asked that all parties concerned demonstrate the political will necessary to achieve that goal. I urge every delegation to participate in the deliberations in a constructive spirit, so that we may rise to the expectations of the international community. Those expectations have been expressed before us here in this room.

I now declare the general exchange of views closed.

Before I adjourn the meeting, I should like to invite all delegations to participate in the work of the Working Groups, which will begin tomorrow morning.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.